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PP RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHCHI #0160 2690738

ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 260738Z SEP 06  
FM AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0281  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 0554  
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 0319  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS CHIANG MAI 000160

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PHUM KDEM TH

SUBJECT: ARMY ALERT TO POSSIBLE SIGNS OF RURAL OPPOSITION

REF: A. A) CHIANG MAI 159 (AFTER HELPING TO PLOT COUP, THIRD ARMY COMMANDER CALLS THE SHOTS)

1B. B) CHIANG MAI 157 (SUPPORT FOR THAKSIN MUTED IN CHIANG MAI FOLLOWING COUP)

11. (U) Media sources report that 2nd and 3rd Army commands have put troops on alert to block counter-coup moves by local organizers of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party in the two regions most densely populated by party supporters.

12. (SBU) According to a journalist at 3rd Army headquarters in Phitsanulok, which covers Thailand's northern region, coup leaders in the Council on Democratic reform under the Monarchy (CDRM) are concerned that TRT activists and officials at the district (tambon) level are organizing Thaksin supporters to mass in Bangkok for a planned Sept. 28 protest. These TRT activists are said to be reacting to rumors that the CDRM will recall funds for village-level development projects, originally distributed under the Thaksin government and immensely popular in Northern and Northeastern rural areas.

13. (U) The Bangkok Post reported Sept. 26 that Third Army Commander Saprang Kalayanamitr ordered soldiers to set up road checkpoints after hearing that groups of Thaksin supporters from the north had earlier reached Bangkok.

14. (U) Meanwhile, former MPs from northern districts have been asked to report to 3rd Army headquarters (ref a). Thaksin's brother, former MP Payap Shinawatra, complied on Sept 25. No-shows include Thaksin's sister Yaowapha Wongsawat as well as Pakorn Buranupakorn and Boonsong Teriyapirom; all three are believed to be out of the country. .

15. (SBU) COMMENT: Whether or not rural TRT supporters have been mobilized by rumors of cuts in popular programs, the fact that 3rd Army officials are alert to suspicions of such action suggests that the muted reaction in Thaksin's northern stronghold to the coup (ref b) may not be as docile as it seems.  
End Comment.

CAMP